

*The great Danger and Mistake of all New
Uninspir'd Prophecies, relating to the* 6
End of the World.

BEING A *693.d.9*
SERMON *6*

PREACH'D at
Serjeants-Inn Chappel, in Chancery-Lane,
November 23. 1707.

With an Appendix of Historical Collections, appli-
cable to all such Prophecies as are Condemn'd in
this Discourse, and to *Those* which are now venting
in the World.

JAMES V. 8.
The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

By EDM. CHISHULL, B. D. late Chaplain
at *Smyrna*, and Fellow of C. C. C. Oxon.

The Second Edition.

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The Great Unsettled and Unsettling
Unsettling of the World
Unsettling of the World

SERMON

PREACHED BY

Rev. James L. Chapin, in Chapin Hall

November 23, 1877

With an Appendix of Historical Collections, applicable to all facts, and containing the whole of the world, and the whole of the world.

The Sermon of the Lord, and the whole of the world.

By Rev. James L. Chapin, and the whole of the world.

Published by the Author, and the whole of the world.

Printed by the Author, and the whole of the world.

REFACE.

THE ensuing Discourse is humbly offer'd as an Essay toward some more elaborate and extensive Work, which may be requisite against the prevailing Notion of this Age; as if the Consummation were at hand. In the mean time, while we are alarm'd by a sordid Imposture of this kind, such needs not to be refuted, but expos'd; our Church possibly accept of this weak Endeavour, for the sake of any Insult she may expect from that of Rome. Whether or no Those are indeed the Enemies that have sown these Tares amongst us; They undoubtedly rejoyce at their springing up: And are now ready to proach two Protestant Churches at the same time: the one as furnishing the Actors, and the other as basely supply'd the Scene, to so deep a Tragedy in Reli-

at the Materials of that Appendix I shall hereafter lay likewise a large share of the same Infirmities to the charge of the Church of Rome: and at the same time, they will abundantly convince the Reader of the Usefulness, and Expediency of this Discourse. These have been well considered, as I am sure they were known, when this Sermon was once deliver'd before your learned Auditory; its Author had not been then misled, as if he had undutifully directed it against

P R E F A C E .

a Right Reverend Father of our Church. But was it not said, some Father of the Church of Greece where the Sermon was at first Compos'd, and Printed to the Factory at Smyrna? 'Tis entrenching, thinks, on the deference that is due to so great a name to bring it, on this occasion, upon the Stage. Since the freedom of other Men has made this rudeness necessary, I will add what follows, for the removal of so Injurious a Reflection. Being then almost a stranger to my Native Country, I was not indeed acquainted with what that most Learned Prelate is prepared on some Scripture Prophecies. But since some persons have taken this occasion to inform me of it, I crave leave to tell them, that I conceive as greatly of that Performance, as 'tis possible to do of one that has not yet appear'd. I expect to see it manag'd with equal Modesty and Judgment, but with a superior knowledge of Scripture and Antiquity, to the incredible Labour of Mr. Mede. And having said thus much, I hope it will sufficiently acquit the Introduction of my Discourse: since it has nothing indeed to boast of, but what it has borrow'd from that Work.

JAMES 5. 8.

The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Know not by what Infirmary of some Men it happens, that they are fond of presaging the final Dissolution of the Universe. Whether this may proceed from a Natural habit of Melancholy, or an Affluence of Piety, or an Ambition of being the first tellers of that great Event ; most certain it is, that they have taken upon them to fix the time of Christ's appearance, and to summon all mankind to the Judgment of the great day. Nor have these Opinions altered amongst the Brain-sick and Enthusiastick multitude ; but have sometimes prevail'd so far, as to pass even those of Note and Character in the Church : particularly, in the * Third, the Eleventh, the Fifteenth, and the late expir'd Century. It were needless to pass any laborious Censure on these men or their notions ; on which every one that now hears me, will naturally make these three Reflections. *First*, That they are insufferably arrogant in pretending to divine that time which, as the Scripture assures us, is searchable to Man, or Angel, or even to Christ himself in his human Nature. *Secondly*, That they will become the Scorn and the Reproach of Mankind, if they themselves have the misfortune to outlive their vain Predictions. *Thirdly*, That though they have falsely foretold Christ's coming, yet he has most exactly foretold theirs, and at the same time cautioned his true Disciples against adhering to them. *Ma-*

See the Particulars of this in the Appendix.

ny shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near; go ye not therefore after them. (Luke 21. 8)

But after all, there will arise this Question, of force and Weight and Difficulty; viz. What then is the meaning of those Scriptures which speak of the End, and Christ's Second Coming as near at hand? How shall we Interpret those Holy Pen-Men, who in that first Infancy of Christianity, seem'd apprehensive that they then liv'd upon the last Scene of this lower World? That *Coming of the Lord draweth nigh*, is the express Assertion of my Text. Answerable to this, St. Paul likewise assures the *Philippians*, that *the Lord is at hand*, (Phil. 4. 5) *The end of all things is at hand*, says St. Peter, (1 Pet. 4. 7) *I come quickly, surely I come quickly*, says our Lord himself (Rev. 22. 12, 20.) agreeably to which we read in the Gospel of St. John *The Hour is coming, and now is, when the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God*, (John 5. 28, 29) To say nothing of those other places of Holy Scripture in which the *last Time*, the *latter Days*, and the *end of the World*, are Phrases put to signify the First Age of the Gospel. These are those plain Expressions which at first View seem to represent the Frame, as just dissolving, and God descending down from Heaven to change the Natural, as well as Moral World: They nevertheless, both have now continued since that time for more than Sixteen Centuries. Hence the great Cardinal *Baronius*, with other unwary Writers of the Church of *Rome*, have not stuck to say that the Apostles were mistaken in this Point; it being that peculiar Matter of which Christ had no Authority to inform them. But 'tis one thing to be uninform'd of the time of Judgment, and another to assign a false time of the Event. And therefore the Ignorance of the Apostles in the former of these two Cases, could hardly ex-

* See Baron. Tom. 1. p. 656. Edit. Rom. Spondan. Epit. 2. p. 5. 24. To which, add the late Dr. Mills in his *Prolegomena* to the Test. pag. 146. col. 2.

Slip they may have committed in the latter. To
 ar therefore this Question, by which some Men
 ve been drove upon untimely Prophecies, and others
 ve rashly imputed an Error to the Inspir'd Pen-
 en; I shall divide the following Discourse into these
 wo General Heads.

I. I shall account for those Passages of Holy Writ,
 which speak of the End, and Christ's Second Co-
 ming as near at hand.

II. I shall consider how far all bold Enquirers into the
 time of the last Judgment, tend not only to dis-
 turb the good Order of the World, but likewise
 to frustrate the most Substantial and most Noble
 Duties of our Religion.

I. Therefore, I am to account for those Passages of
 Holy Writ, which speak of the End, and Christ's Se-
 cond Coming as near at hand: And this, as I conceive,
 will best be done, by shewing,

First, That these Passages of Holy Writ could not
 reasonably be Interpreted, even in the Apostles times,
 concerning any sudden Dissolution of the World. And
Secondly, By enquiring what is that true and genuine
 meaning, which now, and then, and always will agree
 them. — Therefore

First, I am to shew that my Text, and the like Pas-
 sages of Holy Writ, could not reasonably be Interpre-
 ted even in the Apostles times, concerning any sudden
 dissolution of the World. — As the Mind of any Au-
 thor is best explain'd by himself, when in another place
 he is Discourfing on the same Subject; so must this
 be more particularly be observ'd in the Interpreta-
 tion of Holy Scripture: which having been first wrote
 under the direction of the Holy Spirit, cannot easily be
 omitted to any bare Human and Earthly Judge. If
 therefore in the Books of the New Testament, there
 will occur any plain Expressions which either directly

assert, or else necessarily infer, that the Dissolution of the World shall not be very sudden; then the Passages before recited, must admit of some other than what at first sight appears to be their meaning. And so the continuance of the World, from that to these present times shall leave no Suspicion, either of mistake or deceit, of the Holy and Inspir'd Pen-Men. — Therefore

1. When in the 21st Chapter of St. Luke, our Saviour is discoursing concerning the time of the Great Day, there seems to obviate that Opinion, into which some of his Disciples might possibly have been led, viz. that the General Conflagration being near at hand. He tells them, that it shall at length be preceded by some terrible Commotions and Convulsions in the World; but then at the same time, He cautions them not to mistake all Changes either of State or Nature, for Signs of that great Event. For says He expressly, *The End is not by and by: i. e. some considerable Succession of Years shall follow, before the Gospel is to be concluded; and God and Man are to meet in order to their great Account.* To this positive Testimony of our Saviour we may add that of his Apostle St. Paul: who finding that the *Thessalonians* had falsely Inferred from some words of his, that the World should be suddenly at an End, corrects therefore their mistake, in the plain and pathetick Exhortation: *Now we beseech you, Brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his gathering together unto him, that you be not soon shaken in Mind, or be troubled, neither by Spirit, nor by Word, nor by Letter as from us, as that the Day of Christ is at hand. Let no Man deceive you: for that Day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be Revealed, the Son of Perdition, (2 Thes. 2. 1, &c.)* From which latter words of St. Paul, we likewise are afforded another evident reason, why the foremention'd Passages are to be Interpreted of no sudden Dissolution of the Universe. — For,

2. We are plainly here inform'd, that the Day of Christ shall not as yet come, till some great Apostate shall arise, and shall draw the Eyes of the World upon him. Him he here describes as the *Man of Sin, and the Son of Perdition; who opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is Worshipped; so that He, as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing Himself that He is God.* Which Character, whether it will best agree to the Turk, who boasts himself as God in the Seat of the Christian Emperors, or to the Pope, who acts another sort of God in the Seat of Christ Himself, let others determine. I shall only at present make use of this Passage, to infer, that the Authors of the New Testament, did neither themselves Believe, nor Teach others to expect any sudden Dissolution of the World. For whatever was that Monster here intended by the Apostle, it need'd some considerable time to raise him to that pitch of Antichristian Power; and possibly much more till He should be remov'd again, and consumed, as the Apostle expresses it, with the Spirit of the Lord. But then after all, what distance of time should run betwixt this defeat of Antichrist, and the coming of our Saviour, as the Scripture it self, so ought we likewise to be profoundly silent. — But,

3. It is our Saviour's own positive and express Prophecy, that every part of the World sholl at least successively, and at some time or other become Christian, before the Day of his Second Coming. *This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be Preached in the World, for a witness to all Nations, and then shall the End come. (Matth. 24. 14.)* Here therefore the First Christians are advis'd of a vast and extensive Work, a Work of long and prodigious Difficulty: Till the Accomplishment of which, both the Natural and Moral World were to remain intire. True indeed it is, that God could soon have call'd every Nation under Heaven, to the Obedience of the Gospel. But on the other side, those weak and human Methods by which he visibly effected this, gave them an Immeasu-

measurable space of time to expect the Conclusion of the World. We still see after the Tract of almost Seventeen hundred Years, how great a part of this Promise remains yet to be Accomplish'd: Religion having Travell'd by slow Paces from the *East*, and from the Brink of the *Western* Continent, but lately stept over into the *American* World. Tho' therefore we are far from enquiring, and much farther from determining when the End of the World shall be, yet we even now conceive it as approaching at a distance. For as *St. Paul* could say in the former, so can we likewise say in these latter Ages of Christianity, (*Heb. 2. 8.*) *We see now get all things put under him.* And then the Inference is just, that the Dissolution of the World is not so suddenly to be expected. Because according to the same Apostle, *Then cometh the End, when He shall have put down the Rule, and all Authority and Power: i. e.* when by the general Reception of the Gospel, the Destruction of Antichrist, and the Conversion of the Jews, Christ shall have Completed, and even Resign'd up his Kingdom of Grace.—But,

4. The Authors of the New Testament were so well advertis'd of that large distance of Time which should pass betwixt the First and Second Coming of our Saviour, that they have made a careful Provision against those Prejudices and Inconveniencies, which might arise to the Gospel upon that very Account. Hence the Duties of Patience, Long-suffering, and Watchfulness are inculcated to every pious Christian, who affords a faithful expectation of the Day of Christ, shall begin to say with *David*, *My Soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God, when shall I come to appear before the presence of God.* Hence all distrustful and repining Persons are tacitly reprov'd in that Parable of the Evil Servant who began to say in his Heart, *My Lord delayeth his coming,* (*Matth. 24. 48.*) and so presuming on the distance of his great Account, fell into some Irreligious Habits of Intemperance and Oppression. Hence like

Ife St. Peter takes care to obviate the Reflections of
 those Scoffers, which he foresaw in the last Days: Men
 who should tauntingly upbraid our Lord with the tar-
 diness of his Appearance, and say, *Where is the Promise
 of his Coming?* (2 Pet. 3. 4.) in answer to which, he ob-
 serves that the days of the Gospel should be indeed short
 in a divine, however long they may appear in an hu-
 mane Sense. For that one day is with the Lord, as a
 thousand years, and a Thousand years as one day.
 The Lord (says he) *is not slack in his Promise, as some Men
 count slackness.* Whence it is easie to infer, that St. Peter
 did indeed acknowledge a Succession of more than a
 thousand years to the Day of Doom: Tho' having a
 lively sense of the Counsels of God, and the great Circle
 of Eternity, he and the other Apostles spake otherwise
 of that Space as of a little time.

But thus much may suffice from the positive Assertion
 of the Authors of the New Testament, from their Ac-
 count of the Rise and Fall of *Antichrist*, from their Pro-
 mise of the spreading of the Gospel, and from that Pro-
 vision they have made against what may be objected
 from the delay of Christ, to shew that they were not
 possessed of an Opinion, that the Judgment of the great
 Day should so quickly be Revealed. To which we
 may farther add, that in the Revelations of St. John,
 there occurs an expresse Prophecy of a *Thousand Years*:
 Of which whatsoever may be the secret Meaning, yet
 there is a direct mention of a large and considerable tract
 of time, to be accomplish'd in this, and not in another
 World. From hence therefore, as well as from what
 was before alledg'd, I shall not now scruple to con-
 clude, that the words of my Text, as also those Pa-
 rallel Scriptures which seem to speak of Christ's Second
 Coming as near at hand, could not reasonably be Inter-
 preted, even in the Apostles Times, concerning any
 sudden Dissolution of the World. — Therefore,

Secondly, I now come to enquire what is that true and
 genuine Sense, which then, and now, and always will
 agree

agree to this, and the like Passages of Holy Writ. And in order to this, I shall here insist upon four different Considerations, from which, if rightly applied, we may form a plain and easie Interpretation of those I have above-mentioned, and all other Places of Holy Scripture, which speak of the End and Christ's Second Coming, as near at hand. Therefore,

1. We are to consider, that the Gospel was at first preach'd to the Jewish People, upon whom the Sentence of God for the Subversion of their Commonwealth, and the Desolation of their Sanctuary, was shortly to be accomplish'd. For *Daniel* had included the last Period of their Government, from the return of the *Babylonish* Captivity, to the final Overthrow of *Jerusalem*, in Seventy Propetick Weeks. Now these being computed according to our ordinary Denomination of Time, will produce the space of Four hundred and ninety Years: Of which, but Forty-one were now remaining, when our Saviour first began to Preach, after his Baptism in the River *Jordan*. 'Twas therefore this sudden impending Doom, decreed within the space of one Generation, to overtake this unhappy People, that the Inspir'd Writers so often represented to them as the End of all Things, and the Coming of the Son of Man. *The Coming of the Son of Man*; because in revenge of those Indignities which they had offer'd to his Sacred Person, he should join with the *Roman* Armies before *Jerusalem*, under the Character of the Destroying Angel; and (as the History of the Siege informs us) repay one by innumerable Crucifixions. *The End of all Things*; because, upon the Destruction of any People, 'tis all one to them, as if even Time it self and Succession should be no more. For though single Persons have another sort of Existence after the Dissolution of Soul and Body; yet to a dissolv'd Nation, there is no future State. For this reason, as whatsoever is commensurate to the continuance of any People, has been always stil'd and accounted

counted Everlasting; so whatsoever shall at length put a final Period to their Community, may literally be call'd the End. Most true therefore, in respect to the Jewish Oeconomy, was that expression of our Blessed Saviour, (*Mark 1. 15.*) *The time is fulfilled:* As also that other which we read in St. *Matthew's* Gospel, (*Matth. 16. 28.*) *There be some standing here, which shall not taste of Death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.* For as this might easily be said of many that were then his Auditors, so are we Historically assur'd that it was completed in St. *John* the Evangelist: Which gives a farther Light to that hint of our Blessed Saviour, (*John 21. 22.*) *If I will that He tarry till I come, what is that to Thee?* — But,

2. As after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, whatsoever should from thenceforth follow in the Annals of Futurity, was to be called the Times of the Gentile World; so this time of the Gentiles, of how long, or how short continuance soever, might in a true proper Sense be called the End. the latter Days, and the last Time. For God seems to have distinguish'd the Age of the World into Three different Ranks of Time, according to those different Revelations of himself, which he has been pleased to indulge to Mankind. The first of these may be reckon'd that space of about Two Thousand Years, in which God dispensed his Will to the Patriarchs, from *Adam* to *Abraham*. The Second is the same space of about Two Thousand Years, in which God Covenanted with *Abraham* and his Seed, till the Coming of the Messiah. The third is that space, (I do not say as some have rashly done, of about Two Thousand Years, but) of a certain Indefinite Time, from the Messiah to the Day of Judgment. This therefore has receiv'd that last Form of Religion, and that last Dispensation of the Divine Will, which shall ever be manifested to the lower World. Which gave occasion to St. *Paul* thus to express himself, in the first Verse of his Epistle to the
Hebrews:

Hebrews : God who at sundry times, and divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoke unto us by his Son. Nor are we otherwise to understand our Saviour, when in the Gospel of St. John, He says, *The Hour* (or as the Original Word may be rendred, the Season) *is coming, and now is, when the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, i. e.* We are now enter'd upon that Stage of Things, after which, no new Period of Time, or Character of Religion, shall succeed : But this having begun with the Resurrection of Christ, shall end with the Resurrection of all Mankind. — But,

3. If after these Two Considerations for the solving of such Scriptures as speak of the End, and Christ's Second Coming as near at hand, there shall occur any such Text as remains still to be accounted for ; it may probably be said, that it was not so much Wrote to the first and intermediate receivers of Christianity, as to those upon whom the Ends of the World should literally fall. For the New Testament being a standing Rule of Faith and Practice, throughout the several Stages of the Gospel, from its first Infancy, to its extremest Age ; it may reasonably contain some Passages for the peculiar Direction of those in whom it should Terminate, as well as of those in whom it began. Of this sort of Scriptures, there are to be observed three plain and uncontested Instances. The first of these, is that Injunction of St. Paul to *Timothy* ; *Keep this Commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (*1 Tim. 6. 14.*) For *Timothy* being so far removed from the Second Coming of our Saviour, this could not more properly be address'd to him, than to all the successive Readers of this Epistle ; more particularly those very Persons, in whose Hands it should be found at the Sounding of the Last Trump. The Second is that Circumstance of the Last Day mentioned by the same Apostle ; (*1 Thes. 4. 17.*) *We which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds,*

meet the Lord in the Air. By which words, St. Paul
 looks himself, not with the then present Race of Man-
 kind, but with those, who after a long Succession of
 Ages, should be found to be the Inhabitants of the dis-
 solving World. The Third is, that last Consolation
 our Saviour, to the several succeeding Members of
 the Church: *Lo! I am with you always even to the end
 of the World,* (Matth. 28. 20.) i. e. not only with you
 with whom I now converse, not only with you, who
 shall next receive my Gospel, but even with you also,
 whom I shall find Alive at the time of my Second Co-
 ming. But,

4. Besides these Three general Considerations, for
 the Solution of those Texts of which I am now Dis-
 cursing, I shall at length add, that there is indeed a
 distinct, proper, and literal Sense, in which the End,
 the Last Day, and the Coming of the Lord is near at
 hand. For truly and sincerely speaking, as near as is
 the Day of Death, so near also is the Day of Judg-
 ment. That is, to be Accounted last to every Man,
 which is last in his State of Tryal: That which closes
 the Character of his Life, and which seals up the
 Numbers of his Words and Actions, never more to be
 opened till the General Resurrection. Nay, this
 great Concern is anticipated to some Men, even before
 their departure hence. *He that believeth not, is Condemn-
 ed already,* says St. John, (John 3. 18.) And others, St.
 Peter tells us of, *Whose Judgment of a long time lingreth
 not, and their Damnation slumbereth not,* (2 Pet. 2. 3.)
 At least at the minute of Dissolution each particular
 Person undergoes a particular Judgment, which in that
 universal one of the Great Day, shall farther be con-
 firm'd to him. After the Assertion of which Truth,
 I need not now explain, in what sense the Lord is at
 hand; or rather in what sense it is that the Judge stand-
 eth before the Door: Which is the expression of that
 Verse that immediately precedes my Text. For these
 are those Summons which cite the greatest and the least
 of

of Men, to a speedy meeting with their Judge. Three score Years and Ten shall transmit us all into that general Assembly, where the First and the Last are to meet together. And, without any difference as to our Spiritual and Immortal State, we shall soon go to Christ, if Christ does not come to us. — But thus much may at length suffice for an Account of my Text, and other parallel Places in Holy Scripture which speak of the End, and Christ's Second Coming as near at Hand. I come now therefore,

II. In the Second Place, to consider how far all bold Enquirers into the time of the last Judgment, tend not only to disturb the good Order of the World, but likewise to frustrate the most Substantial and most Noble Duties of our Religion. — Having thus far considered that Sense in which the true Prophets of the Gospel told us, even in the first Infancy of Christianity, that the Coming of the Lord drew nigh; let us now proceed to the Examination of those * False Prophets who in these Riper Ages of the Gospel would surpris us with the same Words: And this, not by any Authority from Above, but by the just Judgment of God upon some perverse and arrogant Understanding who is often pleas'd to Blast the most useful Knowledge, and to turn the deepest Wisdom into Folly. Thus, (to omit other Studies more foreign to the subject of Religion) the greatest Ecclesiastical Historians capable of becoming the greatest Schismatick, and the incomparable Discoveries of Chronology have sometimes dwindled into Prophecy. Nor is it the least Aggravation of these Evils that they generally prove incurable: Since for what these Men are pitied by Mankind, that they themselves † passionately admire, and doubt only, whether there is more of Learning or

* See Appendix, Numb. 7. and 8.

† See Scioppius among Voſſius's Epistles. Epist. 587.

Piety in their Laborious Schemes. Now I know not what degree of Learning it may be thought to have run out the exact Annals of the time to come: What depth of Judgment it may seem, to guess boldly at that Day and Hour which God has resolutely conceal'd both from Man and Angel: What prudence to be always prying into the Secrets of a Future Providence, and wearying out a short Life with the Burden of Eternal Counsels. But the Learning of these Performances is a Consideration of another sort: Nor shall I endeavour any more at present, than only to take away the Boast of Piety from these bold Enquirers into the Day of Judgment, and to shew that instead of any Service to Reason or Religion, they contribute as far as in them lies, 1. To disturb the good Order and Oeconomy of the World; 2. To frustrate the most substantial Virtues of Christianity; And, 3. To take away one peculiar Duty which I shall shew to be the great Ornament and Glory of our Religion. Therefore,

1. It is to be charg'd upon all bold Enquirers, into the Time of the Last Judgment, that they contribute as far as in them lies, to disturb the good Order and Oeconomy of the World. — And here, if we rather charge these Men with the pernicious Consequence of their Opinions, than with the actual Mischief they have done; this is wholly owing to their own monstrous Absurdity, and to that sounder Reason which God has planted in the Majority of Mankind. In the mean time, they are strictly answerable for all that Collective Evil they endeavour to introduce, whilst they Prophecy the Death of Nature, and alarm the World with the News of its sudden Dissolution. To compute the Extent of this Injury, let us consider it as the Case of any single Person; who, if Providentially form'd of his approaching End, immediately becomes useless to the Community in which he lives; he straightway deserts his Calling and his Station, and casts

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the things of this World behind him. Much more when the Fate of all things is declar'd, when the Earth and each Inhabitant of the Earth are Summon'd to a Universal Change, must this needs induce a state of Amazement and Confusion: it must necessarily arrest the whole course of Polity, and put a stop to all the Industry and Ingenuity of Mankind. For this Reason, God has wisely conceal'd their End from the *Lesser and Greater World*. And though upon weighty Accounts He has admitted some Exceptions in the Former; yet as to the Latter, He has set to his Seal that it is a venerable and eternal Secret: a Secret which He has committed to no Order of Rational Beings; no, not even to the Breast of His Beloved Son: A Secret, of which we have this only Revelation in the Holy Scripture, *That it is never to be Revealed*. True indeed it is, that we are told of some Signs which shall be previous to the Day of Judgment, but none such as can Justifie the Pretences of this bold Enquiry. For either they are such as shall immediately precede the Judgment; and so may be said to introduce, rather than foretel it: Of which sort, shall be our Lord's own Appearing in the Clouds. Or else they are such Signs as in the Course of God's Providence shall be Antecedent to the Last Day, yet without pointing at, or much influencing its Approach. Of which sort, shall be Earthquakes, Revolutions of Wars, and Rumours of Wars. These ought we seriously to regard, as we would Old Age, or other ordinary Frailties of Human Body: at which nevertheless no Man is so startled, as to renounce his Profession, to quit that Duty which he owes to himself, his Family, or his Country. But when Men, who break upon the Counsels of their Maker, shall pretend to Calculate the Period of the Universe, and to Foretell the time of its Expiration, in the midst of its Health and Vigour; what else do they endeavour, than, to this Surprise, to damp the happy Progress of Arts and Sciences.

sciences; to dissolve Societies, to stop the Course of Justice, to discourage the Benefit of Education, and to extinguish the very Hopes and Prospect of a Posterity. Were things once reduced to these wretched Circumstances, the End of the World would perhaps suddenly ensue: Yet not for any Reason foreseen by our Uninspir'd Prophets; but because, in this stagnating Condition, it were hardly worth preserving. Having thus lost that Salt, by which it hitherto had been season'd, it must needs become Insipid to its Creator, and retain nothing which might deserve the farther care of so Immenſe a Providence. But we are assur'd from better Oracles, that no Dispensation of Religion shall ever Interfere with the just and necessary Affairs of Mankind: No, not even that which shall at length translate them to an eternal Scene. We well know that the Conflagration, as well as the Deluge, shall overtake us all severally employ'd in the most minute and accidental Offices of our Calling: *i. e. Some in the House, and some on the House Top; Two in the Bed; Two in the Field; and Two at the Mill;* Characters, by which great Truth is convey'd to us with a great Simplicity, and by which we are taught that Nature shall at last pass away, without any previous Disorder in the Oeconomy of the World.—But,

2. It is to be charged upon all bold Enquirers into the Time of the Last Judgment, that they contribute, as far as in them lies, to Frustrate the most substantial Virtues of Christianity. — The most substantial Virtues of Christianity, are those which either conduce to, or which are contain'd in an habit of Christian Watchfulness. For those which conduce to it, are a Sobriety, a Fear, a Trembling, a Concern for the Welfare of the Soul: But those which are contain'd in it, are a Patience, a Perseverance, an unshaken Hope, an effectual Faith, an Heroick Love of God. This means, every Christian Watchman lives under constant and unmolested Guard: his Diligence de-

feats the subtilty as well as violence of the Tempter, and makes the largest steps, that are possible in a fallen Estate, towards the measures of an unflinching Obedience. 'Twas therefore the wise and holy Precept of our Lord to his Apostles, and to us all, *to Watch*. And this wide, this comprehensive Duty of Watchfulness he founds upon that Uncertainty, under which we all remain of the time of his Second Coming: Confiding that because we know not when He is to come, we should conclude that He is always Coming; and therefore live over each Day, as if it were the Day of Judgment. But now by how Bold and how Impious a stroke does the confidence of some Men cut asunder these Nerves of our Religion! while 'tis the standing Injunction of our Saviour, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour (i. e. the Season) in which the Son of Man cometh*; These Men can gravely dismiss us from this Duty, and defeat the Reason of it: for say they, *we know the Season and the Day in which the Son of Man shall Come*. But they consider not, that whatever Period they shall fix to these rash Predictions they must unhappily split on either side on one inevitable Absurdity, to the very unHINGING and dissolving of all Religion. For if they allow any longer distance of Time for the expectation of the universal Doom they then immediately induce a State of Supineness and Security: They give occasion to every idle Servant, to eat and to drink with the Drunken, on presumption that his Lord will delay his Coming. But if on the other side they Alarm us with a sudden Warning if they call us to meet Christ as already come to Judgment, if they tell us He is here, he is there, in the Street, or on the House-top; then are they nothing else but the unwarranted and uncommission'd Authors of Surprise, of Hurry, and Confusion. They inspire no doubt, the last degree of Dread into some unframed Minds: But yet such as is far removed from the powerful Motions of Religion: as far as a just sense

Awe is from that of Despair, and the tremblings of a Humble Conscience, from the Failings of the Heart for fear. The first of these Conditions is the Case of a wise Steward : who having faithfully digested his whole Account, waits with a composed, but careful Mind, till his Lord, at his return, shall demand it of him. But the Second, is the Case of a profligate and idle Servant ; who starting at his Master's Call from a deep Sleep, perhaps, or a Debauch, begins at length to heap together his confused Particulars : and under the difficulties of Fright and Distriction, produces probably an unjust, but to be sure, a very lame and imperfect Reckoning. Thus would our untimely Monitors, either lull the World into a Security, or Enchant it into Wildness and Confusion : and this by no less an Attempt, than by wresting out of the hands of an All-wise Saviour, one sacred Helm by which he steers the Vessel of the Church : I mean the Uncertainty of the day of Judgment. For this is that Guard upon unwary Souls, and that Spring of all our Vigilance, design'd by an unerring Providence to keep up a due temper in Religion, checking each Christian Conscience by a just Concern, but overthrowing none by a surprise. — But,

3. It is to be charg'd upon all bold Enquirers into the time of the Last Judgment, that the Contribute, as far as in them lies, to take away one peculiar Duty, which I shall prove to be the great Ornament and Glory of our Religion. — If the day of Judgment be from ever indispensably determin'd, without any regard to the growing Stature of the Church, and the Numbers of the Elect ; if without Reason, and against Revelation, these Men are indeed able to point out the hidden Time ; if they dare take away that thick Veil which God has thrown over so profound a secret ; then is it in vain, nay, then is it unwarrantable,

able, that we * Pray for the day of Judgment. Yet are they the most holy Words of our Lord's Prayer, that the Kingdom of God would come; yet is it the daily Petition of the Universal Church, that God would accomplish the number of his Elect, in a speedy Resurrection to eternal Life. And in this very Petition it is, that we can boast of so great a Guard, and so great a Glory to our Religion. For what greater Guard has the Church of God on the Conscience of all its Members, than by preparing them for the day of Judgment, while it enjoins them to Pray for it? and by presuming that no Wretch will be so hardy as to call upon his Master for the passing of that great Account, which he knows he must make with Grief, and not with Joy. On the other side, what greater Glory to our Religion, than to be thus happily advanced above the Apprehension of any worldly Evil, whilst by this means we are inur'd to condemn it in its most dreadful and collective Force. What Calamity can ever shake the Courage of those Men, who are commanded by an Almighty Saviour to lift up their Heads, and

* Tertullian, de Oratione, Cap. 5. *Si ad Dei voluntatem, & ad nostram suspensionem pertinet regni Domini representatio, quomodo Quidam protractum quendam seculo postulant; cum Regnum Dei, quod ut adveniat oramus, ad consummationem seculi tendat. Optamus maturius regnare, & non diutius servire.* This Father indeed derogates in another work from what he has asserted so Religiously in this, by reckoning up (in his *Apolog.* cap. 39) the *Mora Finis* among other particulars of the Christian Prayers. But this seems to have been the but the peculiar Practice of some few, as appears by the foregoing words. *Quidam protractum quendam seculo postulant.* And in truth the reason given for it by Tertullian, is altogether as peculiar. *Vix maxima orbi universo imminentem, ipsamq; clausulam seculi acerbitates horrendas comminantem, Romani imperii commeatu scimus retardari. Itaq; nolumus experiri, & dum precamur differri, Romana diuturnitati favemus.* Apol. cap. 32.

to look for their Redemption, when the Powers of Heaven begin to shake, and the Elements to melt away with fervent heat. Far from being concern'd at any partial Ruin, at seeing our selves, or any other Limb lopt off from this Harmonious Frame ; we long for the dissolution of the whole : and look upon the destruction of this lower World, as something still wanting to the Perfection of God's Creation. It were now easie in this place, to give the History of Faith and Reason in relation to this important Article : and to shew how Reason has always submitted to these Fears, which Faith has made the Subject of our Joy. But this advantage of Faith above Reason, may perhaps be more effectually represented by one short Reflection on the Example of Two Persons, who were the Champions of them both : I mean, the *great Apostle*, and the bold *Epicurean Poet*. For though the bold *Epicurean Poet*, confiding in the sweetness of his Verse, seems to think himself always trampling on Religion, and charming the Thorn of Fear out of the Mind of Man ; yet being at length arriv'd at the (a) Consideration of the death of Nature, he shrinks, he changes colour, and turns all his Scoffings and Derisions on himself. (b) Straitway in his fear he makes a God, and (c) then prays to it, remove far from his head the Execution of so great an Evil ; to convince him by Reason, and not by Fact, of the certainty of so astonishing a Truth.

(a) ----- *Maria ac Terras celumq; tuere.
Horum naturam triplicem, tria corpora, Memmi,
Una dies dabit exitio : Multosq; per annos
sustentata ruet moles, & machina mundi. Lucret. lib. 5. v. 93.*

(b) According to his own exploded Maxim, *Deos fecit timor*-----

(c) *Quod procul a nobis flectat Fortuna gubernans :
Sic ratio potius quam res persuadeat ipsa
occidere horrifono posse omnia viâ frogore. Ver. 107.*

But the great Apostle, discoursing on the same Subject, is so steadfast, as to bid us *comfort one another with these words*, (1 Thess. 4. 8.) he encourages us by a Glorious and All-powerful Expression, to *love the Appearing of the Righteous Judge*, (2 Tim. 4. 8.) He groans with the whole Creation to be *deliver'd from the Bondage of Corruption*, (Rom. 8. 21.) nor can time it self run faster towards Eternity, than he earnestly desires to be received into it. Hence therefore learn the Strength and the Beauty of Christianity: here take the Specimens of its real Excellence, and the certainty of its divine Original. But judge at the same time, what can be the Piety of these Men, who would rob it of so great a Glory: Who by inspiring a vicious Curiosity, would unqualifie us for Praying for the day of Judgment, and who, by representing the same day as discoverable to human Reason, would unqualifie that too for being the Object of our Prayer. But these Dreams shall pass away as the shadows of the Morning, while the Counsel of the Lord shall stand. God shall quickly call his Church into its Triumphant State: Yet not in Conformity to any Schemes of theirs, but in compliance with our All-powerful Intercessor, and the fervent Prayers of his Elect. Then shall it be discern'd, what it is that has most successfully contemplated that happy Day; whether he who, by making our Hope seem to be destroyed, would destroy the nature of our Christian Hope, or he *who by hoping for that he sees not, does with Patience wait for it*, (Rom. 8. 24.)

But thus much may suffice for the last general Head of this Discourse, under which I was to consider *how far all bold Inquirers into the time of the Last Judgment, run not only to disturb the good Order of the World, but likewise to frustrate the most Substantial and most Noble Duties of Christianity.*—— It now only remains, that neither dreading its Approach, nor presuming on its Delay, we reverence this dread Secret of Religion, the unalterable

uncertainty of the day of Judgment : That we permit
to obtain all those powerful effects upon our Mind,
for which God has screen'd and fenc'd it with so thick
darkness : That neither our Lives, nor our Specula-
tions, ever thwart the Wisdom of our Saviour, who
is threatening to come upon us as a Thief in the Night,
and maintains one continued Watch through all the Ages
of the Gospel : That we never quit our share in that
Glory of the Church, the Glory of Praying for the
consummation of all Things : yet never presuming
on his, without a well-grounded Confidence, and a just
refuge of our partaking in the Triumphs of that Day.
Whilst we stand thus prepar'd with our Loins girt,
and our Feet shod, and our Hearts resign'd up to God's
unsearchable Counsels, the succours of his Grace shall
strengthen our imperfect Resolutions, and shall teach
us to long for, and to confide in the Coming of our Sa-
viour : that so when He shall bespeak us in the language
of the Revelations, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward
is with me*, we may cheerfully reply with St. John, and
say, *Even so come, Lord Jesus, Amen.*

APPENDIX

OF

Historical Matters and Observations,

Applicable to all such

PROPHECIES

As are Condemned in the foregoing Discourse, and to those which are now venting in the World.

THE first Design of this Discourse, was occasion'd by a deep Concern to see so many wretched Pamphlets publish'd towards the end of the last Century, fixing with great assurance the Second coming of our Saviour, and reviving those mad Doctrines, which were deliver'd some years since by *Mason* and his Associates. But that which at last determin'd me to handle that Subject, in the manner I have here done, was the consideration of this Phantom, having appear'd so often in different Ages of the Gospel. Of this therefore I have here subjoin'd an History, suggested into eight remarkable Examples: Of which some

will appear to be the Errors of Pious and well-meaning Men; but others to be the Delusions of Profligate and Wicked persons that would impose upon Mankind. And since our new Fraternity of Prophets is to be divided, most probably, betwixt the one and the other character; 'tis to be hop'd they may all reap useful advice from these Collections. Those who are sincere in their Pretences may (*) learn to abhor an Error, that has left a blemish, even on some Saints and Fathers of the Church. But those who are now acting a wicked part, on which the Judgment of God has been so often and so signally reveal'd, may conclude, without the assistance of Prophecy, that while they tread in the same steps, they may too soon arrive, if they repent not, at the same unhappy end.

I.

Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 6. Cap. 7. Ann. Dom. 204.
 Εὐσεβίου ἡ' Ἰσθ' ας συγγραφέων ἐτερον, &c, i. e. *About the same time another Writer, one Judas, discoursing in his works on the seventy Weeks of Daniel, fix'd that account of time to the tenth year of the Reign of Severus, and was of Opinion, that the celebrated Appearance of Antichrist drew near. So very much did the Rise of that Persecution, then set on foot against him, disorder the minds of some Men.*

II.

Spondani Epit. Bar. Anno 255. §. 5.
Quod pertinet ad excitatam persecutionem, i. e. As to the Persecution of that time, by which, as Dionysius of Alexandria complains, so many Holy Men were most cruelly tormented, we may judge to what a degree it was carried, from some Passages of St. Cyprian. For he, upon that account, was of Opinion,

as Tertullian, S. Cyprian, and Iacintus; all which were too positive concerning the near approach of the end.

that

that the end of the World, and the time of Antichrist, drew near.

And in truth, nothing can be more express than the words of that Father here referr'd to by *Baronius* *Scire enim debetis*, (says he) &c. i. e. You are to know assuredly, and to believe and hold it as a certain Truth, that the end of the World, and the time of Antichrist, is at hand. See *Cyprian's* 58th Epistle in the late *Oxford* Edition, and the Preface to the Book he wrote, *De exhortatione Martyrii*. To which may be added, what we read of the same Persuasion, *Ambr. Dam.* 259. viz. *Sævit usq; adeo persecutio*, &c. i. e. The Persecution under *Valerian* raged to that degree, that the same *Dionysius* interpreted those unhappy times of Antichrist, foretold by *St. John* in the Revelations, to be fulfill'd in the Reign of that Emperor.

III.

Baron. Ann 1001. *Tom.* II. *pag.* I. *Edit. Rom.*

Novum seculum, &c. i. e. The New Century begins with the year 1001, a year, which by the Assertion of some Men, had been foretold to be the last of the World. As least, it was supposed to be revealed that Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, so named Antichrist. These Notions had been first publish'd in *France*, preach'd at *Paris*, and by this time grown common throughout the World: being believed by most, receiv'd with great concern by the most simple, but rejected by all of any Learning. For among others, *Abbon*, Abbot of *Fleury*, a Man eminent for Learning and Piety, says he look'd upon himself obliged to endeavour the Refutation of that Error from the Holy Scriptures, in an Apology which he wrote and dedicated to *Hugo* and *Robert*, then King of *France*.

Part of this work of *Abbon's*, *Baronius* has inserted in his Annals, and is as follows. In the Church of *Paris*, being then a young Man, I heard a Sermon by

fore the People concerning the end of the world : In which it was Asserted, that upon the completion of a Thousand Years, Antichrist should presently appear, and not long after, the Universal Judgment should ensue — For a Report had spread every where throughout the World, that when *Lady-Day* should fall on *Easter-Eve*, without all doubt the world was at an end.

IV.

Baron. Ann. 1106. Tom. 12. pag. 51.

Quod pertinet ad Antichristum fuit quidem opinio non vulgum virorum, &c. i. e. 'As to the Affair of Antichrist, it was the Opinion even of some considerable persons, that Antichrist was to be revealed in this Century. Among others, of *Norbert*, a Man very Eminent in this time: Concerning whom, *St. Bernard* thus writes to *Geofry of Chartres*. When I lately had the Honour to see the face of *Norbert*, and to receive several things from his Heavenly Mouth, I did not indeed hear so much from him himself. But when I desired to know his thoughts of Antichrist, he protested he knew most certainly, that he was to be revealed in this present Generation.

Baronius had indeed good reason to call this the Opinion of no inconsiderable persons. For *Norbert*, as well as *Bernard*, is a great Saint of the Church of *Rome*, once Archbishop of *Magdeburg*, and Founder of the Premonstratensian Order, whose Reliques I have seen worshipped with great Devotion, by his own Monks at *Prague*, and lying under a Gilt Crown of prodigious Dimensions, at least three Ells diameter in the Ring. But besides *St. Norbert*, the surprise of this time had, it seems, reach'd the infallible Chair itself. For, as our Annalist in the same place informs us, Pope *Paschal II.* had ordered his progress into *Lombardy* : where he had then summon'd the Council of *Gnastalla* to be celebrated in *October*. But being

being on his way thither, he halted a while at Florence, on account of a general Report he there found of Antichrist being suddenly to appear. But upon Consideration, understanding the vanity of that Discourse, he prosecuted his intended Journey.

'Tis to be observ'd, that what *Baronius* calls a Halt of the Pope's at *Florence*, *Platina*, and other Authors, make a very large (a) Council, in which *Flaventinus*, Bishop of that place, was Censur'd, for having divulg'd, out of a vain Ambition to make himself the Author of some great matter that Antichrist was already born. Be that matter as it will, every one will observe that Pope *Paschal* was at a loss for his Infallibility; and some may perhaps add, even for his humane prudence, upon this occasion. For whatever it was that *Norbert*, good Man intended; 'tis possible that by Antichrist being near at hand, those *Florentines* meant nothing else but that very Journey of his Heliopolis.

V.

Tb. Campanella Append. ad Mon. Hisp. pag. 358. ed. Amst. 1653.

' *Historia cum ipsa experientia attestantur*, &c. i. e. A History as well as Experience testifies, that they who endeavour to restrain the sense of Scripture to particular times and places, are much in the wrong. On which Subject, *Werner Rolewink* in his *Fasciculus temporum*, writes under the year 1364. after this manner *Joannes de Rupe-scissa*, a Minorite Fryar, foretold several matters that were shortly to come to pass concerning two Antichrists, the Desolation of Nations, the entire Oppression of the Clergy, and the Reduction of the whole world to the faith of Christ before the

(a) *Bini Council, Tom. 3. part. 2. pag. 438. B. Edit. Colon. 1611.*

year of the Lord 1370. All which he pretended to have been revealed to him by the Lord Jesus, though none of them ever yet come to pass. But the Author lay long in Prison writing Wonders of the time to come.

These Wonders have been preserv'd very luckily by the careful and industrious Mr. Brown, in the second volume of his *Fasciculus rer. expetend. & fugiend.* And whoever is Master of so much leisure, may there compare them with the late *Warnings of Mr. L—cy, and the* from the *Desart of the same Author*. But if that Game is indeed playing from the same Quarter, to which we have so many other wild Fanaticisms, since the Reformation of Religion, 'tis to be wish'd, the Zeal of that honest Editor were remark'd at the same time, who in his Preface to those effusions of the *De Rupe-scissa*, puts in, as well as his Author, for the plea of Prophecy. *Eum si prophetam ignoscas, pari ratione me quoque talem potes appellare; qui tibi Angliam Jesuitis, pestilentissimis Res-publicæ libris & monachis insulsis liberatum iri brevi spondeo, ne res ad restim redigatur.* The meaning of which Words, may be put into plain English thus. 'If this Fellow passes for a Prophet, you may allow me to be a Prophet at the same rate. For I can foretell, that the Jesuits and other Missionaries leave off playing their Juggles in this Nation, they may chance to dye Martyrs for their pains. See *Fascic. rer. expetend. & fugiend. Tom. 2. p. 493.*

VI.

Id. Tb. Campanella ibidem, pag. 361.

Christianus Wurstisius in Chronica sua Basileensi, &c. *Christianus Wurstisius* 'in his Chronicle of *Basil*, makes mention of one *Nicolas a Buldesdorf*, who in the year 1446, going into the Council of *Basil*, Surnam'd himself the Angelic Pastor, and proclaim'd, that by him Antichrist should be destroy'd, the Jews deliver'd from Captivity, the Church collected out of all Nations, the wicked extirpated, with several other things of the same

' same nature: upon which he was punish'd as an Heretick. Yet several years after this, (*viz. ann. 1534*) the Annabaptists of *Munster* set up with the same confidence, and with a very considerable force begun to put their designs in execution, justifying them (as *Stedman* tells us) by a peculiar Treatise which they Published and Entitul'd the (a) Restitution.

Thus far *Campanella*: But to give the truer Idea of that Tragedy, I shall here transcribe a piece or two of the Historian above-mentioned.

Their Principles (as far as I am at present concerned to note them) he delivers in these words. *Hoc est tempus quod prænuntiarint omnes Prophetæ, &c. i. e.* ' This was the time foretold by all the Prophets in which God would have Righteousness observed throughout the World: and that as soon as (a) *their King* in the

(a) *Durante obsidione librum conscribunt & edunt, Restitutionem ipsi vocant, &c. fol. 128. i. e. During the Siege, they Write and Publish a Book Entituled by them, The Restitution. In this Book, they declare among other things, that the Kingdom of Christ must come before the Day of Judgment: in which the Godly and Elect should Reign, but all the Wicked be every where destroy'd. They declare likewise, that the People might lawfully depose their Magistrates: and that without any Commission from the Apostles, the present Ministers ought to use the power of the Sword, and constitute a new Government. Withal, that no one was to be Tolerated in the Church, except he were really a true Christian: and lastly, that it was impossible for any Person to be sav'd, unless he brought all his Wealth into the Publick Stock, and left nothing that he could use for his own.*

(b) *The King they constituted, was called John of Leyden, who by his own and the new Prophecies of a Goldsmith, compass'd that Point: viz. a Commission, as they pretended, from Almighty God, to take into his possession the Empire of the World. What became of him after the Restoration of the City, our Historian tells us, fol. 133. Rex in locum notiore, &c. i. e. The King being brought into a more conspicuous place, was tied to a Stake, He was attended by Two Executioners Armed with red hot Pinchers. He held his Tongue during the three Gripses. But afterwards, imploring constantly God's Mercy, when he had been torn in that manner, above an hour, he was at last struck through the Breast and Died. His Associates likewise endured the same Punishment.*

execution of his Office, had advanc'd things so far that Righteousness reign'd in all places, then at length should Christ deliver the Kingdom into his Father's hands. *Sleid. Hist. fol. 129. Argent. 1558.*

Upon these Pretences they had now possess'd themselves of the City and Government of *Munster* : where during their short Reign, they gave such a Specimen of the Spirit they were act'd by ; that I shall not presume to describe it by any words of mine, but leave the Reader to be his own Judge, from the Passage I shall here annex. *Ad hoc tempus primi nominis apud ipsos propheta, &c.* At this time, *John Matthews* the Prophet of chief Rank amongst them (for they usurp'd to themselves the stile of Prophecy) gavè order, that whatsoever Gold or Silver, or other moveable Goods, any Man was Master of, he should produce it under pain of Death, and bring it into a Storehouse they have provided for that purpose. The People astonish'd by this severe Edict, complied therewith : nor was it possible for any one to escape or withhold any part of his Possessions. For two Damselfs, that were Prophetesses, took care to give certain Information of any Concealment that was made. By chance, about the same time, a certain Smith, by Name, *Hubert Tudeling*, had, in some Discourses of his, happen'd to ridicule these Prophets, as they call'd themselves. Which being discover'd, they Summon the Multitude, commanding them to assist in Arms, and immediately Indite and Condemn the Man to Death. The thing mightily surpris'd the People. But the above-mentioned chief Prophet seizes the poor Man, throws him on the ground, and then stabs him with a Spear : yet so, that the Wound was not mortal, though he gave it with all his force. Afterwards he orders him to be remov'd, and then strikes him as he lay upon the ground with a Club which he had snatch'd out of the hand of a by-stander. But having not yet dispatch'd him with all this, the

C

; Prophet

' Prophet signifies he had a Revelation, that the Man
 ' time was not yet come, and that God had favour
 ' him with his Grace. The Man however expir'd in
 ' a few days, and the Prophet himself, as soon as he
 ' was inform'd of it, run madly through the Crowd
 ' with a long Spear in his hand, crying he was sent by
 ' God to drive the Besiegers from the City. And in
 ' that posture he was presently met and kill'd by a Sol-
 ' dier of the Camp. *Sleid. fol. 127.*

VII.

Nothing ever look'd in good earnest to like the End
 of the World, as the Distresses and Confusions of the
 Nation, during the late unnatural Rebellion. And
 in truth, they operated accordingly upon many spi-
 ritick Dispositions of that time. But on these I shall
 not here enlarge: as well, because they are known to
 Familiarly already, as because they seem to have pro-
 ceeded from more Ignorance and less Design, than
 others of the same Century. 'Tis more remarkable
 that Two so great Scholars, as *Scioppius* and *Cornelius*
 should affect to direct Princes, and their Prime Mini-
 sters, by Rules they pretended to have observ'd from
 the Prophecies of *Daniel* and *St. John*. *Scioppius* resented
 it very highly, that Cardinal *Mazarin* never listen'd to
 his Visions: ' Though, as he pretended, there never
 ' was either Father or Doctor of the Church, who
 ' well understood the Scripture, and from thence de-
 ' cover'd so undoubtedly the End of the World, and the
 ' Secrets of the Revelations, as he had done. He gave
 a full account of his Abilities that way, in a (*) Letter

(a) See this among *Vossius's Epistles*, Numb. 587. and observe
 likewise two remarkable general Heads of that System of *Scioppius*
 viz. 1. *Clavis scientiæ ad aperiendâ regni coelorum mysteria*
propediem consummanda. 2. *Antinuntiatio regni Christi*
populi Christiani in orbem terræ futurum, usque ad novissimos
annorum, & expeditionem Gog, & internecionem ejus.

he wrote to *Vossius* in the Year 1642. And there it is
 re are inform'd, that one of those Enquiries, which
 with great Labour and Study he had long dwelt upon,
 as concerning the state of the Last Day, when Time
 self shall be no more : *Præsenti seculo* (says he) *veniente*
atre futuri seculi : i. e. *The Everlasting Father being to ap-*
pear in this present Century.

To say nothing greater of *Comenius*, he seems to have
 been a Person equal in point of Learning to Monsieur
Facio. And yet he condescended to become the Co-
 adjutor of *Kotterus* and *Dabricius*, Two Visionary Im-
 postors of the last Century : attending upon them in
 the same quality that Monsieur *Facio* now attends upon
Marion. He publish'd the Prophecies of them,
 and of *Christiana*, under the Title of *Lux in Tenebris*, in
 the Year 1657. a Book which was afterwards Printed
 in London, 1664. and Entituled, *The Prophecies of Chri-*
stophorus Kotterus, Christiana, Poniatovia, and Nic.
Dabricius; Three Famous German Prophets. It was re-
 printed again in the Year 1666, with several Improve-
 ments, by *Comenius* : who by this time, was himself
 become such a Proficient in Prophecy, that in the Year
 following, he sent his Arrest to the *English* and *Dutch*
enipotentiaries at Breda. It was a Book he Publish'd,
 and Address'd to them under the ensuing Title ; *An-*
gelus Pacis, &c. i. e. 'The Angel of Peace sent to the
English and *Dutch* Embassadors of Peace, and from
 them to all Christians throughout *Europe*, who is also
 quickly to be sent to all People throughout the World;
 with orders that they present themselves, that they
 resist from waging War, and give place to Christ,
 the Prince of Peace, who is now about to speak Peace
 to all Nations.

This, it seems, was his Trumpet to a *Millennium* :
 the beginning of which he fix'd to the Year 1672. But,
 his great good Fortune, being then Eighty Years of
 age, he died in the Year 1671 ; and so never lived to
 be reproach'd in Person for the failure of his Scheme.

But *Maresius* (a) (from whom all these Particulars are now taken, and who effectually exposed the Madnes not only of this Prophet, but of (b) *Serrarius*, and all other Enthusiasts of that sort) surviv'd some few Months the Period of his Antagonist: as if preserv'd on purpose to see God, and Nature, declaring in his Favour.

VIII.

Hitherto we have been considering those deluding and deluded Prophets, who have already been sufficiently refuted by time it self, and the present State of Things: By the Sun and Moon, and by all the faithful Witnesses in Heaven. But Two others remain yet to be remembred, whose Periods are not yet past, but are indeed just at hand: and which therefore, if not strenuously opposed from Reason and Scripture, may prove the growing occasion of Fanaticism, Insurrections, and other Mischiefs, in our own, and our Childrens time. I mean, *Cusanus* and *Jurieu*.

Cusanus, otherwise called *Cardinal Nicolas de Cusa*, has been always reputed, not only for his great Dignity in the Church, but for his Knowledge in the Laws, in Divinity, in the Mathematicks, and the study of Chronology, one of the greatest Persons of the Fifteenth Century. Yet with reference to the Character of the Man, as well as that of *Scioppius* and *Jurieu*, I observe with too much reason, in the foregoing Discourse, that the incomparable Discoveries of Chronology, have long since dwindled into Prophecy. For *Cusanus*, who had acquir'd to himself a singular Reputation in Chronology, by a Piece of his his, that was read in the Council of *Bazil*, about the Year 1436. under the Title *Reparatio Kalendarii*, being a Correction of the Julian

(a) Vid. *Maresii Antirrheticum sive defensionem pii* contra *J. A. Comenium*.

(b) A Fanatick Author, who Prophefied great things from the Conjunction of the Planets, in December, 1662. all relating to Christ's Second Coming, and the near Establishment of a Millennium.

andar for all Time to come, did afterwards frustrate the whole design and pains of that Work, by another which he wrote in the Year 1452: wherein he advances an Opinion, that all Time then to come, should amount to little more than about Two Centuries and half. This the Reader will find at the end of his second Volume, under the Title of *Conjectura de Nativissimis diebus*, i. e. *A Conjecture concerning the last Days*. In that Treatise he dispatches the measure of Time to come after this concise manner. *Tunc veniet* (says he) *judicaturus*, &c. i. e. *Then shall Christ come to judge the quick and Dead*——*And this shall come to pass after the year of our Lord's Nativity 1700, but before the year 1734 of the same*. The Method by which he collects so great an Account so very punctually, is this. He computes 50 years to one Jubilee, and 34 Jubilees from the time of Christ's Resurrection, to that of his second coming. For, says he, (*ut post primum Adam*, &c. i. e. *As according to the Learned Philo*, the Destruction of Sin arriv'd in the 34th Jubilee after the first *Adam*, by the waters of the Flood, in the days of *Noah*; so we conjecture that, in the 34th Jubilee after the Second *Adam*, shall arrive the Destruction of Sin by the fire of the Holy Ghost.

As for Monsieur *Jurieu*, he is an old *French* Prophet, still living, if I mistake not, and justly own'd on all hands, to have shewn himself, in many other performances; a Man of great parts, piety and learning. But we would wonder what could give him such a warmth of Brain, when in the year 1086, he wrote the Fifth Chapter of his Second part of *Accomplishment of Prophecies*. For without any manner of reserve, or distrust of his Account, he there gives us the Chronology of the century then to come, with the same Air as if he were Writing the Transactions of one already past. *Antichristianism* (says he, meaning *Papery* by that word) was born about the year 450, *Leo* the First then sitting in the Chair. It shall dye about the year 1710. This

may happen sooner—But I do not see that it can go much farther, unless it be to 1714. Again in the same Chapter—This will fall in the year 1710, or thereabouts? Wherein Images shall be intirely abolish'd, with Popery—But the remainder of the World's Age, he calculates after this manner. I suppose 30 years shall pass for the reuniting all Christians. And this Union shall be effected, about the year 1740.—When the Union shall be effected, no less than 45 years will be requisite to run over all the Earth, and Convert the Nations that are Strangers to the Covenant. Add 45 to 1740 that will fall on the year 1785: in which shall come the Glorious Reign of Christ on the Earth. —

This is indeed a very hardy stroke; and such as I will reflect upon no otherwise than by Silence only. For tho' Monsieur *Jurieu* dare positively affirm this, yet I dare not positively deny it. I shall only desire him to observe, that whenever Christ shall indeed come, *every idle word that Men have spoke, they shall give an Account thereof in the day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be Condemned*, Matt. 12. 27. If therefore he has groundlessly amus'd the Church, by these or the like confident Interpretations, I know not how he can atone for it, but Repentance before he dyes. But *Cusanus*, who has been already dead almost 250 years, has indeed left some sort of Atonement, if he proves to be in a Mistake. To his Conclusion of the Treatise I have above Censur'd and which, in Justice to him, and this whole Cause, shall add as the conclusion of this Section. For it contains, I think, a very true Observation; and, as Experience has since testified, even a true Prophecy at the same time. Many Persons have wearied themselves in those Prophetic matters, whom different Views have always led into different Opinions, every one abounding in his own Sense, and not one conspiring with another. Several Seasons are now gone, which even some Learned Men have imagined, were never

to arrive. And thus Thousands have spent their Days, and Thousands shall still spend them, commenting, without end, on the Prophecy of *Daniel*. See the Works of *Nic. de Cusa*, in fol. *Basil* 1563.

IX.

But I am at length come to the consideration of that *Age*, which to the reproach of right Reason, not to say of the Christian Religion, is now acting in the World. 'Tis that of a new Fraternity of Prophets, first associated in the *Cevennoes* of *France*, about the beginning of this Century. And in truth, while they continued on that Scene, every one was at liberty, out of regard to their Distresses and Persecutions, either to censure, or pity them, as he thought fit. But nothing, besides their own Shame and Punishment, can ever atone for those Impostures, which since the arrival of *Julias Marriou*, that have been venting in the happy Calm, and Serenity of this Kingdom. In their Book, called *The Cry from the Desert*, we are told that this happened in September, 1706. And in the same piece it is, that we are favour'd with a List of his Associates: all of them his own Country-men, except Mr. *Facio* of *Geneva*, the only person of this Fraternity, that has no Ignorance, nor Persecutions, to plead in his excuse. As for *Marion*, 'tis certainly true of him, and perhaps of most of his Accomplices, that he is not to be esteem'd a Refugee, escap'd hither for the sake of Conscience and Religion. For according to his own account, The *Barab of the Age* (so he entitles the *French King*) conducted him safe, by Capitulation, to *Geneva*. And then, being so determin'd by Inspiration, he thought fit to break those Articles, and return again into the *Cevennoes*; the same power, to be rid of him at any rate, was glad to send him away under a second Convoy to the same place. The reasons of their having since singled out this Kingdom for the chief Theatre of their designs, they themselves seem to put upon the Liberty and Humanity of our Constitution: Blessings, which

are indeed valuable in themselves, but too apt to be abus'd to these horrid purposes. Whatever it be, they had no sooner profess'd their gifts in this Region of spleen but they began to stagger some unstable Minds: nay even to engage some of no ordinary Note and Understanding in their party. Amongst these, a Gentleman who at first wrote himself *John Lacy*, Esquire, but now *John* Surnamed *Lacy*, undertook to answer for their Integrity, and to espouse their Inspirations for Divine. His words therefore, I shall here give the sum of the pretences, as far as I am concerned to parallel them with the prophecies I have before observ'd.

‘ Their Message (says (a) he) is, that the grand Jubilee, the acceptable Year of the Lord, the accomplishment of those numerous Scriptures touching the new Heavens and the new Earth, the Kingdom of the Messiah, and the Marriage of the Lamb, the first Resurrection, or the new Jerusalem now descending from above, is now even at the Door, and to be manifest over the whole Earth within the short term of Three Years. He adds, that this Mission shall be witnessed by a Deluge of Judgments on the Wicked as Famine, Pestilence, Fire from Heaven, Darknes &c. That the exterminating Angels shall root out the Tares, and there shall remain on the Earth only good Corn; and that the Clergy of all Men, might by their Studies, be most capable of discerning this, at the same time their Interest did not lye in the contrary Ballance, since whenever the time comes that Infants, Women, Young Men and Old do Prophesy, there will manifestly be little need of them.

‘Tis most probable, that the short term of Time sign'd in this important Message, is taken from *Isaiah*. But the strains in which it is deliver'd, are very consonant to the other Enthusiastick Pretences of the Appendix: particularly that worst sort, of Numb.

(a) See Mr. Lacy's Preface to *The Cry in the Desert*. pag. 21.

and VI. relating to *De Rupue-sciffa*, and the Fanaticks of *Munster*. It consists either of such matters which are indeed the Scriptural Characters of Christ's Future Kingdom, but of the near approach of which no real Token has been yet observ'd, *viz.* The separation betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked; the descent of the new *Jerusalem*; the first Resurrection, and the like: or else of one peculiar Circumstance, which in truth is in some measure come to pass, but is falsely reckon'd up among the Marks of Christ's Kingdom, *viz.* the Abasement and Rejection of the Clergy. This is indeed the great and *new Asserted Right of the Christian Church*, according to the Inventions of a late renowned Book, publish'd, we see, very seasonably for the introduction of some such incongruous inconvenient *Farce*. For as we are there taught, that there is indeed no difference betwixt the Clark and Minister of the Congregation; so we here find all equally commission'd in this new Assembly. As 'tis there at large asserted, that the Laity too have their Authority to distribute the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; so we are here inform'd with what Solemnity Brother *Cavalier* put this in practice in the *Cevennees*. But this being the first Christian Church that has been Establish'd upon the Principles of that Book, and it having been carried on by so extravagant a Conduct, as well as now hiss'd off the Stage with so general a scorn, 'tis to be presumed, that the Book it self will prove one of those crude Designs, which, though too many applaud in Speculation, yet none will endure in Practice.

The late execution of the Law upon the Three Principal of this prophane Fraternity, together with that Censure they have underwent from the Churches of their own Nation, makes all Arguments unnecessary, and perhaps all farther Reflections unmerciful in their condition. It may suffice therefore to observe, that in consequence of a Sentence pronounced against them at

Guild-

Guild-Hall, on *November* the 22d, 1707, they have been since expos'd on a Scaffold in different places of this City; and that a Paper denoting their Crimes, was affixed to their Heads as follows.

‘ *Elias Marion*, Convicted for Falsely and Prophane-
 ‘ ly pretending himself to be a True Prophet, and
 ‘ Printing and Uttering many things, as dictated and
 ‘ revealed to him by the Spirit of God, to terrifie the
 ‘ Queen’s People.

‘ *John D’ Audé* and *Nicholas Facio*, Convicted for
 ‘ Abetting and Favouring *Elias Marion*, in his Wicke-
 ‘ ed and Counterfeit Prophecies, and causing them
 ‘ to be Printed and Published, to terrifie the Queen’s
 ‘ People.

But I must still crave the Liberty of adding one peculiar Observation, concerning those Prephetick Warnings that have been publish’d in Mr. *Lacy*’s Name: viz. That whoever shall take that Piece in hand, together with the *Alcoran* of *Mahomet*, will immediately discover the strange remarkable resemblance which they bear to one another. That Gentleman is pleas’d to tell us, that he is at present in the Forty fourth Year of his Age: the very same in which *Mahomet* first began to vent his Impostures to the World. He useth in his Warnings with these Words; (a) *Choose: Own or Deny*: And with the same Charge *Mahomet* enforces his *Alcoran*; (a) *Believe, or Believe it not*. They both continue their Narrations in the Person of God, still addressing to themselves: they both abound with frequent importunate Justifications of their pretences: they both introduce God (b) informing them of the Scoffs and Objections that are made against them in

(a) See Mr. *Lacy*’s Prophetical Warning, pag. 7. and the *Alcoran*, chap. 17. towards the end.

(b) See the Prophetical Warnings, pag. 18, 101. and the *Alcoran*, chap. 15, 25, 37. and elsewhere.

the World : And lastly, they both make the (c) same Challenge to all of equal Capacity and Education ; viz. *Mahomet* to write the like *Arabic*, and *Mr. Lacy* to deliver the like *Latin* to that he uses, without the Benefit of Inspiration. Yet as to this latter particular, there must be own'd to be a great difference in the Ground of the two Challenges. For the *Arabic* of *Mahomet* is, and ever was, the standard of Eloquence to that Language. But the *Latin* of *Mr. Lacy*, is in truth nothing but the Idioms of other Languages, drest up in *Latin* words, or words of *Latin* Terminations. Nay, the Idioms he uses, are not those of his own Mother Tongue : as one would indeed reasonably expect, if he were really the first Instrument of his Revelations : but they are those peculiar Blunders, which the (d) *French* and *Italians* so frequently adopt into their *Latin* Discourses ; and which therefore are most properly fasten'd upon this Gentleman, by some *Sergius* that attends him. I would not indeed lightly accuse him, or any Person, of Copying after so detestable an Original : But if he has not indeed done so, he will be surpris'd to see how exactly he has happen'd to jump upon the same form and manner of Revelation. At least it behoves him to consider (if, by any late Disemper of Mind or Body, he has not been led into a

(c) They say, *Mahomet* hath invented this Book. Say unto them, come and bring any that resembleth it in Doctrine and Eloquence, &c. *Coran*, chap. 10. about the middle. Whether the *Latin* of the Inspirations here following, could be furnish'd by me from such Initiation or Progress therein, as I have before given an account of ; whether of the many Thousands in London, in like circumstance, there are any that can perform it, I leave others to pass their Sentiments upon. See *Mr. Lacy's* Preface to his Prophetical Warnings, p. 10.

(d) For instance, Demandem & respondete, for interrogabo respondete, pag. 60. And again, deliberate, pensate ; for degerate, cogitate, pag. 91.

persuasion

persuasion of his own Sincerity) that those *Warnings* of his are nothing but one continued, Flaming, Monumental Sin against the Holy Ghost, I do not mean, the Sin peculiarly so called: because there is still room to hope, that he may be capable of an exemplary Repentance: but I mean one of those greatest Affronts that can possibly be offer'd to that Eternal Spirit, while he charges so many wild Forgeries on Him who is our *Guider into all Truths*.

X.

But I conclude with one general Reflection, applicable not to this only, but to every mistaken Prophecy of this sort: *viz.* That there is one peculiar Evil, and one peculiar Good, to be Collected from them all.

The Evil to be fear'd, is this; Least when Men have fix'd too peremptorily any Scriptural mark of Time and betrayed themselves into a persuasion, that those which are indeed the darkest, are the clearest Passages of Holy Writ; as soon as the Event shall disappoint their GuesSES, and Nature, together with Religion shall proceed in its wonted course; they may at length be tempted to make a Blasphemous Mistake: and rather than suspect their own Idoliz'd Hypothesis, impute the failure to those divine Oracles, on which it was falsely grounded.

See there one very surprising Evil of these Attempts. But it is to be ballanced on the other side, by a superior Good, such, as not only Conquers, but Triumphs over so great an Evil. I mean, the Glory that redounds to God and to Religion, even from these losing Vanities of sinful Man. For though so many Pretenders to this Secret, have all along mistaken the obscure and uncertain Prophecies; we have Prophecies as clear and certain as the Light, that they should be so mistaken. We are in general assured, that *Varie of False Prophets shall arise, such as shall shew Signs and Wonders, and deceive (if possible) the very Elect.* Na

we are told more particularly, that there shall arise Messengers of this very Falshood ; Men who shall say, *See here ; See there ; The Time draweth near, &c.* Accordingly, these things have literally come to pass, in almost every Century of Christianity : and that too, under two very discouraging Circumstances, the Sinfulness of the Enquiry, and the Impossibility of succeeding in it. One would indeed have wonder'd, after the first Authors of our Religion had been reprehended by those last Words of our departing Lord ; (*Acts* 1. 7.) and acquainted very positively, *that it was not for them to know the Times and Seasons* ; that any amusement about Times and Seasons, should ever perplex their Successors in the Church. Add, that this was still less to be expected, when the search was carefully represented to be as impracticable, as it was improper for us ; and when to discourage any inquisitive temper of Mankind, it was said to be above the Knowledge, even of the Angels that are in Heaven. Yet to shew that nothing which has been evidently revealed, can ever fail of being as eminently fulfill'd ; such Persons always have been found that are ambitious to employ themselves, even in that unwarrantable and successful Task. By this means, while they falsifie the difficult and hidden Scriptures, they themselves are the completion of the clear ones. *The truth of God, as the Apostle speaks, hath more abounded through their Lies to his Glory* : And though their Predictions never yet contriouted to attest the Divinity of the Gospel ; yet their vicious incorrigible Curiosity does daily do it.

What hinders then, but that instead of being *soon shaken, or troubled in Mind*, (as, upon this very Surprise, above Sixteen Hundred Years ago, some *Thessalonians* were) we improve all such perverse Accidents into matter of Religious Joy, and Peace in Believing ? We see with what Truth our Saviour has foretold the Coming of such Men : and we may therefore rest securely

ly upon the Advice he has added to it, (a) *Beware of them; believe them not; go ye not out upon their groundless calls.* He saw how many presumptuous Uncommission'd Guides, would venture to entrench upon Eternal Secrets, and disturb the Religion of Mankind. He has not therefore left his Church unarm'd, and unprovided, against so dangerous a Snare. On the contrary, by three wise and careful Admonitions, He has directed our Thoughts and our Behaviour, in relation to this important Article. The first is that check upon our Curiosity; and that warning against all faulty Enquiries after that which is undiscoverable, and past finding out: (b) *Of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man.* The Second is, the Use which he makes of this awful Secret, and the Charge which He thereupon leaves upon the Conscience of Mankind: (c) *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour in which the Son of Man cometh.* The Third is the universality of this Advice, and his own positive Declaration that he then directed it, not only to his first Disciples, but to every Person of every Nation, throughout all Ages of the Gospel: (d) *What I say unto you, I say unto ALL, Watch.*

WE therefore, even WE, of this sinful time and place, have the Happiness of our Saviour's own personal Exhortations, and his Instructions, how to acquit our selves in this, or in any Juncture more difficult than this. For were the Alarm now given, not by any Prophane Impostor, but by Men of unsuspected Piety and Learning, assuring us that *the great Day of the Lord was come*; We are always to question their Authority, till *the Powers of Heaven begin to shake*, and the *Darkness of the Sun and Moon* bear witness to the Mes-

(a) See Mark 13. 21, 22, 23. Luke 17. 23. and 21. 8.
 (b) Matth. 24. 36. (c) Matth. 25. 13. (d) Mark 13. 37.

age. Yet thrice happy they; who can, from their Heart, wish it were so indeed, and say, with a calm assurance, *they were looking for their Master's Coming!* For such a looking will equally fit them for their own End, if they are not indeed ordained to see the end of the World. Their own particular Arrest, and their consignment into God's hand, must certainly happen at their Death: And then it matters not, when the General Assize is to ensue: whether at the end of Two hundred, or Six hundred, or even a Thousand Generations from our first Parent. Now that is a tract of Time, more than once mentioned in (e) Holy Scripture, which, according to the known Computation of the Antients, will amount to 30000 Years. And tho' indeed it is no where used on purpose to mark the Age of the World; yet there is not, I believe, any so direct Testimony, that the World shall be of any shorter continuance, as this indirectly insinuates, that it may last so long.

(e) Deut. 7. 9. and the 2d Commandment, Exod. 20. 6. and Deut. 5. 19. to which add Exod. 34. 7. Jer. 32. 18. noting the Chaldee Paraphrase and Syriac Version, and Psal. 103. 17.

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